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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000632

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NEA/IPA FOR  
GOLDBERGER/SHAMPAINE/SACHAR; NSC FOR ABRAMS/PASCUAL;  
TREASURY FOR CONNOLLY  
JCS FOR LTG FRASER  
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TAGS: ECON PREL KWBG KPAL ENRG IS

SUBJECT: TRILATERAL FOLLOW-UP: WEST BANK ELECTRICITY AND  
AREA C "MASTER PLANS"

REF: A. JERUSALEM 403

1B. TEL AVIV 450

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary. Palestinian contacts have confirmed that twenty-six villages in the West Bank have been connected to the Israeli electrical grid. According to World Bank representatives and members of OQR Blair's office, twenty-five "master plans" have been approved for Area C villages, mostly prior to 2007. End Summary.

12. (U) The Department press statement issued March 30 following the Secretary's trilateral meeting with PM Fayyad and MOD Barak included the following two commitments, designed to improve the quality of life for Palestinians in the West Bank:

-- The parties have completed connection of 27 Palestinian villages in the West Bank to the Israeli power grid and, in an unprecedented action, have connected Jericho to the Jordan power grid.

-- Master Plans for 25 Palestinian villages in Area C have been approved.

Electricity Connections Increase

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13. (SBU) Palestinian Energy Authority (PEA) Director General Mohammad Aqal told Econoff on April 8 that the last of twenty-six "mostly Area C" villages in the Jenin area were connected to the power grid in March 2008. Aqal said the project was funded by the French Government. (Note: When we asked about the discrepancy between his number (26) and that of the statement (27), Aqal speculated it was a difference in how the two sides count individual villages. He claimed that no other Area C villages had been connected to the grid recently. End Note.)

14. (SBU) Local French representatives said that the most recent connection to the Israeli electrical grid resulted in electrification of a few villages around Rummana, northwest of Jenin. This was the fourth and final connection to the Israeli grid under a French project that totaled more than eleven million Euros and provided electricity to more than 60,000 Palestinians in the northern West Bank. According to the French, the project took nearly seven years to be

implemented.

¶ 15. (SBU) World Bank contacts claim that there are now only a few villages ("four or five") in Area C in the northern West Bank that do not have electrical connections. In the southern West Bank, there are about 70 small localities that do not yet have electricity connections. According to the Bank, connections for all of the remaining villages/localities have been approved and work is ongoing.

¶ 16. (U) The interconnection power line between Jordan and Jericho became operational on February 25 (reftels).

Little Recent Movement on Master Plans

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¶ 17. (C) World Bank representatives and members of the office of Quartet Representative Blair told Econoffs that twenty-five of the 130 villages in Area C have GOI approved "master plans". (According to these contacts, the GOI interprets prevailing Jordanian law in the West Bank as requiring a master plan for each village before construction permits can be issued.) Most of these twenty-five plans were approved prior to 2007, with "only a few" approved in 2007. Due to the limited number of approved master plans, ConGen contacts estimate that more than ninety percent of Palestinian requests for construction permits for Area C have been denied in recent years.

WALLES